

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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12

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 CPR-01 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 SP-02 /037 W

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O 211059Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3446

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 2092

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NI, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL LETTER TO GENERAL OBASANJO

RF: LAGOS 2080, STATE 40668

1. WE HAVE REVIEWED QUESTION OF DELIVERY OF PRESIDENT FORD'S LETTER TO GENERAL OBASANJO AND CONCLUDE THAT (A) THE LETTER WOULD SERVE LITTLE PURPOSE ADDITIONAL TO THE MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCE ALREADY TRANSMITTED, AND (B) THE TEXT WOULD AT ANY RATE HAVE TO BE REVISED SO THAT ITS TONE IS LESS PERFUNCTORY AND TAKES ACCOUNT OF THE TRAUMA SUFFERED HERE LAST WEEK AND STILL EVIDENT THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

2. GIVEN WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT OBASANJO'S PERSONALITY AND ABOUT THE PREOCCUPATIONS FACING HIM RIGHT NOW, PERSONAL DELIVERY OF THE LETTER WOULD BE VIEWED AS A DEVICE TO GAIN AUDIENCE. THIS COULD BE READILY MISINTERPRETED TO THE DETRIMENT OF FUTURE ACCESS WHEN BILATERAL ISSUES OF REAL SUBSTANCE MAY BE AT STAKE.

3. WE THEREFORE CONCLUDE IT INADVISABLE TO DELIVER PRESIDENTIAL LETTER AT PRESENT TIME, EVEN WERE IT APPROPRIATELY REVISED. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO A SIGNED PRESIDENTIAL LETTER TO BE DELIVERED TO GENERAL OBASANJO BY SECRETARY KISSINGER IF HE VISITS NIGERIA. EMBASSY WILL PROVIDE SUGGESTIONS FOR TEXT IN DUE COURSE.

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EASUM

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Authority: CunninFX
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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